

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 SUVA 01450 01 OF 02 290119Z
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /055 W
-----290153Z 015650 /67

R 280200Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY SUVA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5665
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 SUVA 1450

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PFOR FJ
SUBJ: PREVIEW OF 1977 FIJIAN ELECTIONS

1. ALLIANCE GOVERNMENTS MANDATE EXPIRES IN MAY 1977, AND
THREE PARTIES CONTESTING NEXT YEAR'S ELECTION NOW IN PROCESS
SELECTING CANDIDATES FOR 52 COMMUNAL AND NATIONAL SEATS IN
PARLIAMENT. QUESTION CURRENTLY DEBATED HERE IS WHETHER
TROUBLED ALLIANCE WILL CALL EARLY ELECTION TO EXPLOIT DISARRAY
IN INDIAN OPPOSITION NATIONAL FEDERATION PARTY (NFP).

2. DISASTROUS SPLIT IN OPPOSITION OVER SUPPORT OF AMINISTRAT-
ION'S LAND TENURE BILL (ALTO) HAS LEFT IT HIGHLY VULNERABLE
TO EARLY ELECTION. OPPOSITION LEADER SIDDIQ KOYA AND NFP
PRESIDENT IRENE JAI NARAYAN STILL IN STRUGGLE UNITE PARTY
UNDER OWN LEADERSHIP, BUT KOYA, WHO LED PARTY FACTION WHICH
VAINLY OPPOSED ALTO UNLIKELY BOW OUT SOON. NARAYAN FACTION
SUCCESSFULLY SUPPORTED MEASURE WHICH GUARANTEES 30 YEAR TENURE
TO FARMERS ON LEASED LAND WITH RENT BASED ON LAND VALUATION
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 SUVA 01450 01 OF 02 290119Z

FORMULA. LAND QUESTIONS ARE OF COURSE ESPECIALLY CONTROVERSIAL
WITH MOST INDIAN FARMERS DEPENDING FOR LIVELIHOOD ON LEASED
LAND COMMUNALLY OWNED BY ETHNIC FIJIAN IN PERPETUITY.
MRS NARAYAN, THOUGH WORKING HARD HEAL SPLIT. REASSERT CONTROL
HAS TOLD ME SHE DESPAIRS OF REPAIRING ALTO DAMAGE IN TIME TO
FACE ELECTIONS IF THEY HELD EARLY. INTERNAL SQUABBLING

CONTINUES AND MRS. NARAAYAN WONDERS IF RIGHT CAN BE BRIDGED AT ALL.

3. IN CONTRAST, ALLIANCE AFFAIRS WERE IN GOOD ORDER AND SELECTION OF CANDIDATES GOING SMOOTHLY UNTIL RECENTLY. SOME WERE UNOPPOSED, OTHERS WON THEIR PRIMARIES HANDILY WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS. THEN CAME STUNNING DEFEAT OF HOUSE SPEAKER SIR VIJAY SINGH, POPULAR AND WIDELY RESPECTED FORMER PRESIDENT OF INDIAN ALLIANCE, BY NAUSORI BUSINESSMAN, K.R. LATCHAN. SINGH REPRESENTS STRONGLY FIJIAN CONSTITUENCY ON NATIONAL ROLL AND DEPENDS HEAVILY ON RUNNING MATE, RATU WILLIAN TOGANIVALU, HIGH-RANKING CHIEF AND MINISTER OF FIJIAN AFFAIRS, FOR FIJIAN VOTE. AFTER REPEATEDLY ASSURING SINGH OF HIS SUPPORT, RATU WILLIAM BALDLY CHAMPIONED LATCHAN AMONG FIJIAN FOLLOWERS. SINGH, OF COURSE, IS FURIOUS OVER TREACHERY, WHICH HE BLAMES ON TOGANIVALU'S IRRESPONSIBLE PERSONAL SPENDING HABITS. RATU WILLIAM, SINGH ASSERTS, IS HEAVILY IN DEBT AND BACKED LATCHAN IN RETURN FOR PROMISE OF FINANCIAL BAIL-OUT.

4. SPEAKER TELLS ME HE NOW IN NO-WIN SITUATION. HE RECEIVED OVER 25 PERCENT OF VOTES AND THUS CAN APPEAL TO ALLIANCE COUNCIL TO OVER-RIDE PRIMARY VERDICT, WHICH IT PROBABLY WOULD DO WITH PRIME MIN ENCOURAGEMENT. BUT LATCHAN THEN LIKELY TO RUN AS INDEPENDENT, CLAIMING WILL OF VOTERS IGNORED BY ALLIANCE, AND GO ON TO VICTORY WITH RATU WILLIAM'S CORRUPT SUPPORT.

5. RESULTING CLANGUOR AND RECRIMINATIONS WITHIN PARTY HAVE ANGERED ALLIANCE LEADER, PRIME MIN RATU MARA, AND SPOILED FACADE OF PARTY UNITY AS ELECTION APPROACHES. USING WELL-WORN SEMANTIC DEVICE, RATU MARA DECLARED WHILE HE WAS NOT AND NEVER WOULD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 SUVA 01450 01 OF 02 290119Z

INTERFERE WITH SELECTION OF CANDIDATE HE VERY DISAPPOINTED SINGH FAILED OF SELECTION SINCE IS OUTSTANDING SPEAKER, WORKED FOR RACIAL HARMONY, APPARENTLY UNAPPRECIATED IN HIS CONSTITUENCY THOUGH CO-FOUNDER OF ALLIANCE. MARA WARNED AGAINST CAMPAIGNING AGAINST COLLEAGUES, UNDERMINING PARTY SOLIDARITY. SINGH SPECULATES, WITH HINT OF SATISFACTION, THAT DOUBLE-CROSS COULD COST ALLIANCE UP TO SIX SEATS THROUGH INDIAN PROTEST VOTE.

6. ANOTHER POTENTIALLY TROUBLESOME DEVELOPMENT FOR ALLIANCE IS RISING INTEREST IN FIJIAN NATIONALIST PARTY (FNP) FOUNDED BY S.B. BUTADROKA, A FIERY RACIAL CRANK WHO SITS IN HOUSE AS INDEPENDENT, HAVING BEEN OUSTED FROM ALLIANCE FOR INTER ALIA DEMANDING REPATRIATION OF FIJIAN INDIANS. THIS IS KEY PLANK IN PARTY PLATFORM WHICH ALSO CALLS FOR RESERVATION OF GOVGEN, PRIME MIN, OTHER CABINET POSITIONS FOR ETHNIC FIJIAN, AND RETURN TO FIJIAN ALL LAND SOLD BEFORE AND AFTER CESSION. 7. OBJECTIONABLE ARE PLANKS ADVOCATING MORE GOF PROJECTS IN RURAL AREAS AND COMMERCIAL TRAINING FOR FIJIAN.

7. FNP HAS CAREFULLY CHOSEN 17 SEATS TO CONTEST IN HEAVILY FIJIAN CONSTITUENCIES WHERE ITS "FIJI FOR THE FIJIANS" VIEWS WOULD HAVE MOST APPEAL. WHILE MOST ALLIANCE POLITICIANS DISMISS FNP AS PARTY OF ULTRAS WITH NO FUTURE IN TOLERANT MULTI-RACIAL COUNTRY, THE ARTICULATE BUTADROKA HAS WORRIED ALLIANCE SUFFICIENTLY TO FIELD STRONGER CANDIDATE THAN BEFORE IN HIS CONSTITUENCY. FNP CAMPAIGNERS ARE PLAYING WITH SOME EFFECT ON GOF ALLEGED NEGLECT OF FIJIAN RURAL AREAS. ONE ALLIANCE RESEARCHER TOLD ME COMPARATIVELY MODEST INROADS BY FNP CANDIDATES COULD THROW CONSTITUENCIES WHOSE ALLIANCE INCUMBENTS ARE IN OFFICE BY THIN MARGINS INTO OPPOSITION CAMPS, THOUGH FNP ITSELF PROBABLY WOULD NOT GAIN SEATS.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 SUVA 01450 02 OF 02 290121Z
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /055 W
-----290155Z 015662 /67

R 280205Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY SUVA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5666
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE FINAL SECTION OF 2 SUVA 1450

8. TIMING OF ELECTION STILL IN DOUBT. MAJOR EVENTS AROUND WHICH CAMPAIGNING AND BALLOTING MUST BE PLANNED ARE ROYAL VISIT MIDDLE OF FEBRUARY AND MEETING OF COUNCIL OF MINISTERS EC/ACP NOW SCHEDULED HERE FOR APRIL. POLITICAL ADVANTAGE ARGUES FOR ELECTIONS EARLIEST DATE POSSIBLE TO PERMIT MAXIMUM ALLIANCE EXPLOITATION OF FNP DISORGANIZATION AND TO HALT WHATEVER SLIGHT MOMENTUM FNP GAINING FROM ETHNIC APPEALS. BUT ELECTION ROLLS STILL UNDER PREPARATION AND SELECTION OF CANDIDATES WILL NOT BE COMPLETE UNTIL MID-JANUARY. PREPARATIONS FOR QUEENS VISIT WILL THEN PREOCCUPY GOF INTO FEBRUARY. LOGIC POINTS TO ELECTIONS IN MARCH OR MAY, A DECISION RATU MARA REPORTEDLY HAS NOT YET MADE, OR AT LEAST CONVEYED.

9. COMMENT: AT THIS STAGE OF PRE-ELECTION PERIOD, ONE CAN CAUTIOUSLY SAY THAT A 1977 ALLIANCE LANDSLIDE, WIDELY PRE-DICTED DURING 1976, COULD SERIOUSLY IMPEDED IF (A) NFP GAINS SUFFICIENT BREATHING SPACE PUT ITS HOUSE IN ORDER (B) VIJAY SINGH AFFAIR PROVOKES SIGNIFICANT INDIAN DESERTIONS TO NFP, (C) ALLIANCE BICKERING OVER SINGH CONTINUES WITH UNPREDICTABLE EFFECT ON PARTY UNITY AND (D) FNP DRAWS ENOUGH SUPPORT TO PRODUCE SPOILER EFFECT WHICH CAN ONLY BENEFIT NFP. NINE OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 SUVA 01450 02 OF 02 290121Z

THESE ELEMENTS ALONE COULD CREATE VICTORY FOR OPPOSITION; TAKEN TOGETHER THEY AT LEAST SHOULD SHAKE ALLIANCE COMPLACENCY, INJECT SENSE OF URGENCY INTO CAMPAGIN.

10. PROSPECTS, HOWEVER, CONTINUE STRONGLY FAVOR SOLID ALLIANCE VICTORY, ALBEIT HARDER WON THAN ANTICIPATED. ENORMOUS PRESTIGE OF PRIME MIN AND LEADING CHIEFS BACKING HIM, STRONG TASTE FOR POWER OF INDIAN ALLIANCE WITH POTENT MERCHANT SUPPORT, AND FIRM ADHERENCE OF GENERAL ELECTORS PARTY SWING VOTE OF EUROPEANS, PART-EUROPEANS AND CHINESE STILL REPRESENT UNBEATABLE COMBINATION AS OF DECEMBER 1976. FLANEGIN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARTY LINE, ELECTION FORECASTS, NATIONAL ELECTIONS, PARTY SCHISMS, OPPOSITION PARTIES, PARTY FACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: SmithRJ
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976SUVA01450
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760474-0682
From: SUVA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t1976128/aaaaahak.tel
Line Count: 195
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: SmithRJ
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 MAY 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <23 SEP 2004 by SmithRJ>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PREVIEW OF 1977 FIJIAN ELECTIONS
TAGS: PFOR, FJ
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006